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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the statement of the President of the Security Council of 31 October 2001 (S/PRST/2001/30), in which the Council requested me to submit quarterly reports on the situation in Somalia. The report covers developments since my previous report, of 25 June (S/2007/381), including the progress and outcome of the National Reconciliation Congress, as well as efforts to promote an all-inclusive political process in Somalia pursuant to the request of the Security Council in its resolution 1772 (2007). It also includes an update on the security and human rights situation and on the humanitarian and development activities of the United Nations agencies and programmes for Somalia.

II. Main developments in Somalia

Political developments

2. During the period under review, the political situation in Somalia was marked by the exacerbation of divisions within the transitional federal institutions, the hardening stance of the opposition and the intensification of the insurgency. This led to political uncertainty and further delayed the implementation of the key tasks in the Transitional Federal Charter and progress towards national reconciliation.

3. The National Reconciliation Congress was held in Mogadishu from 15 July to 30 August 2007, with the participation of 2,600 delegates representing the clans, as well as women's groups and the Diaspora. The Congress was organized by the National Governance and Reconciliation Committee, which was chaired by former President Ali Mahdi Mohamed.

4. Some of the Hawiye subclans in Mogadishu, as well as the Asmara-based opposition, refused to attend the Congress. These opposition groups set preconditions for attending the Congress, including the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from Somalia and the relocation of the Congress to a neutral venue, preferably outside Somalia, with an impartial party playing the role of the mediator.

5. At the conclusion of the Congress, participants agreed on a number of outcomes. These included the announcement of an end to all conflicts and feuds between Somali clans since 1991; a call to all Somali parties to voluntarily disarm

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and return looted property; the urging of the transitional federal institutions to complete the constitutional processes that would lead to a Federal State; the conduct of a census and free and fair elections before the end of the transitional period; the demand for a multiparty political system in the country; and a call upon the Transitional Federal Government to amend the Charter so as to allow non-parliamentarians to join the cabinet.

6. The leaders of the transitional federal institutions pledged to fully implement the recommendations adopted by the Congress. President Abdullahi Yusuf assured delegates that the Transitional Federal Government would hand over power following free and fair democratic elections at the end of the five-year transitional period in 2009. Ali Mahdi Mohamed also indicated that efforts would be made to reach out to the groups inside and outside Somalia opposed to the Transitional Federal Government. My Special Representative, François Lonseny Fall, led a delegation of the international community to Mogadishu, and urged leaders of the transitional federal institutions to broaden the reconciliation process and reach out to all opposition groups.

7. On 16 September, a Somali delegation led by President Yusuf and composed of the Prime Minister, the Speaker, the Chairman of the National Reconciliation Congress and other delegates visited Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The Somali leaders signed an agreement, under the auspices of King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, on the implementation of the outcome of the Congress. President Yusuf and King Abdullah also discussed the possibility of sending peacekeepers from African and Arab countries to pave the way for the withdrawal of foreign forces. Subsequently, the Asmara-based opposition groups and some Hawiye clan elders rejected the agreement.

8. From 6 to 13 September, the coalition of opposition groups held a parallel congress called the Congress for the Liberation and Reconstitution of Somalia in Asmara. Participants included representatives of the Union of Islamic Courts, the "Free Parliamentarians" led by the former Speaker of the Transitional Federal Parliament, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, the Somali Diaspora, as well as members of civil society and clan elders. The Conference concluded with the formation of the Alliance for the Liberation and Reconstitution of Somalia, the election of its leadership and the adoption of an action plan. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed was appointed Chairman of the executive branch and Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, former Speaker of the Transitional Federal Parliament, was appointed head of the Central Committee, composed of 191 members. In its final communiqué, the Alliance for the Liberation and Reconstitution of Somalia underlined that its overriding aim was to liberate Somalia from Ethiopian occupation and launch a political reconstitution process that would involve all Somali stakeholders and rebuild a national State. The Alliance for the Liberation and Reconstitution of Somalia stated that it would enter into talks with the Transitional Federal Government only after the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces.

9. Members of the Hawiye opposition to the Transitional Federal Government based in Mogadishu distanced themselves from the Asmara Conference, stating that the organizers had not made the necessary arrangements for their transport to Asmara. On the other hand, some members of the Transitional Federal Parliament questioned the relevance of the Asmara Conference.

10. On 6 September, Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi travelled to Djibouti to meet with Abukar Omar Adani, one of the main financial backers of the Union of Islamic Courts, and Bashir Rage Shirar, a former member of the Alliance for Reconstruction and Counter Terrorism, and, on 12 September, he met with Abdikassim Salad Hassan, former President of the Transitional National Government.

11. On 21 September, the Chairman of the Supreme Court, Yusuf Ali Harun, was arrested by the authorities in Baidoa along with his colleague, Mohamed Nur Shegow, a Supreme Court judge allegedly for embezzling funds and other unspecified crimes. In reaction, Prime Minister Gedi held an extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet on 22 September and demanded the immediate release of the two members of the judiciary, and ordered the dismissal of Attorney General Abdullahi Dahir, who had reportedly instigated the arrest of the judge and the Chairman of the Supreme Court. On 1 October, Prime Minister Gedi wrote to my new Special Representative, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, conveying the Cabinet's stance on the issue. Attorney General Dahir refused to leave his post and maintained that Chief Justice Yusuf Ali Harun and Judge Mohamed Nur should face corruption charges. This incident created a serious rift within the executive branch of the transitional federal institutions. On 27 September, President Yusuf signed a decree dismissing Chief Justice Yusuf Ali Harun.

12. During the month of October, members of the Transitional Federal Parliament in Baidoa deliberated on the performance of Prime Minister Gedi's Government since the beginning of the transition period. The deepening political rift between President Yusuf and Prime Minister Gedi became a subject of legal debate with both sides having different interpretations of the Charter, particularly whether the deadline of two and half years for the completion of federalism had been reached, and with President Yusuf accusing the Prime Minister of failure to meet the established benchmarks. Consequently, on 22 October, members of Parliament voted by 115 votes to 23 with 99 abstentions to table the constitutional dispute between the President and the Prime Minister. Following the vote, Prime Minister Gedi travelled to Addis Ababa for the second time in October to consult with the Ethiopian authorities.

13. On 29 October, Prime Minister Gedi tendered his resignation, which was accepted by President Yusuf. Deputy Prime Minister Salim Aliyow Ibrow was appointed acting Prime Minister pending Parliament's election of a permanent replacement. President Yusuf has since initiated consultations with clan and political leaders to appoint a new Prime Minister.

14. Meanwhile, on 17 September, fighting broke out between forces loyal to the self-declared independent republic of "Somaliland" and the semi-autonomous region of "Puntland" in Laascaanood, the capital of the disputed Sool region. Although the fighting started as a result of intra-clan tensions, it continued sporadically through September, drawing security forces from both "Somaliland" and "Puntland" and resulting in a high number of casualties. My Special Representative and his team urged senior "Somaliland" and "Puntland" officials to de-escalate the situation and reduce tensions in the region. In October, the situation in the Sool and Sanaag regions deteriorated further, with increased fighting between both parties. On 15 October, after heavy fighting which resulted in at least 10 deaths, "Somaliland" troops took control of Laascaanood. In the aftermath, "Puntland" mobilized its

forces to regain control of the area and repel what they considered an invasion by "Somaliland" authorities and foreign elements. "Somaliland" rejected the allegations and vowed to continue the struggle until the region was liberated.

Security situation

15. During the reporting period, there was no significant improvement in the security situation in Somalia. The situation in Mogadishu remained volatile, with daily attacks mostly by insurgents targeting Transitional Federal Government forces and Ethiopian military personnel. The United Nations security phases in effect in Somalia are indicative of the security situation. Mogadishu and the district of Badhadwe are in phase five (evacuation of all United Nations staff), and the remainder of Somalia is in phase four (emergency operations only), except for the western part of "Somaliland", which is in phase three. Somalia presents one of the most challenging security environments, with considerable restrictions on United Nations operations, particularly in the capital city.

16. In its final report, dated 18 July 2007 (S/2007/436), the Monitoring Group on Somalia, established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1724 (2006), stated that "Somalia is literally awash with arms" from various sources, and that the quantities and variety of arms entering the country, in violation of the arms embargo were greater than at any time since the early 1990s. The Monitoring Group also stated that huge quantities of arms were being supplied to various actors in Somalia, exacerbating the already precarious and volatile security situation in the country.

17. The Transitional Federal Government and Ethiopian forces continued to concentrate on securing Mogadishu and seeking to apprehend and disarm insurgent elements. Limited progress has been made to date, with targeted attacks by insurgents continuing on a regular basis. Such attacks include the use of roadside bombs, rocket-propelled grenades, mortar and hand grenade attacks against Transitional Federal Government personnel and Ethiopian forces. In addition, there have been frequent gun battles between the Transitional Federal Government security forces and insurgent elements lasting several hours. On 27 October, local insurgents and Ethiopian troops engaged in some of the heaviest fighting in Mogadishu in months.

18. Most checkpoints are now being manned by militias loyal to the Transitional Federal Government, many of which appear to lack a proper command structure and training. The Transitional Federal Government has difficulties in maintaining security in the absence of professional police and military forces, although it has recently taken steps to rectify this concern. While the United Nations does not so far appear to be a primary target of any attack, recent developments and information received through multiple open sources are beginning to generate more concern. The arrest and subsequent release of national staff of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia and the World Food Programme (WFP) is a case in point.

19. Following an unusually heavy insurgent attack on a police station in the Hodan district of Mogadishu on 28 September, President Yusuf called a meeting of cabinet members and senior security officials to address the deteriorating security in the capital. New security measures were considered at the meeting. Other measures included special training courses for militiamen in the police and military forces of

the Transitional Federal Government, as well as improved coordination of military operations with external forces based in Mogadishu.

20. Civilians have been caught in the line of fire as insurgents continue to stage targeted assassinations and suicide bombings. Furthermore, Transitional Federal Government forces and Ethiopian troops have, at times, opened fire indiscriminately, causing many civilian casualties. Although September witnessed fewer incidents than those seen in July and August, the magnitude and seriousness of the incidents has risen sharply, with the increasing use of rocket-propelled grenades and high calibre weapons. In addition, there has been a spate of assassinations targeting Transitional Federal Government district administration officials, clan elders and prominent journalists.

21. Elsewhere, lawlessness and interclan violence continued in large areas of central and southern Somalia. Tensions remained high in the Lower Juba region, particularly in and around the strategic port city of Kismaayo, which is witnessing a continued power struggle between the leading Darod clans — the Marehan and the Majerteen — for control of the city. The Hiraan and Galguduud regions also saw interclan tensions and confrontations during the reporting period.

22. Piracy incidents, which had diminished significantly throughout most of 2006, are on the rise again. Pirate attacks continue to threaten the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The work of humanitarian agencies has been considerably affected by the insecurity of recent months both on land and at sea. Nearly 80 per cent of assistance to Somalia by the World Food Programme (WFP) is shipped by sea, but the availability of vessels willing to carry food to the country has been cut by half because of piracy. According to the International Maritime Organization, 15 hijackings of ships took place in the first half of 2007, with 2 of the attacks involving WFP-chartered ships.

23. On 25 September, the President of France announced that his country would be prepared to send warships to protect humanitarian supplies, especially assistance provided by WFP, for a period of two months. He also invited other members of the international community to join this initiative. My Special Representative issued a statement welcoming the contribution from France.

III. Activities of the United Nations and the international community

24. In compliance with Security Council resolution 1744 (2007), in which the Council requested me to assist the transitional federal institutions with the National Reconciliation Congress, my Special Representative coordinated efforts of members of the international community to provide support and assistance to the Congress, through the International Advisory Committee. During the Congress, delegates from the Committee made five visits to Mogadishu, where they addressed the participants and held talks with the National Governance and Reconciliation Committee and Transitional Federal Government officials. The Committee also held talks with the Hawiye opposition to encourage them to use the Congress as a forum to voice their grievances. In addition, throughout this period, the Committee discussed financial and technical issues with the organizing committee.

25. On 10 September, the International Contact Group held a meeting in Rome to review the political, security and humanitarian developments in Somalia. Participants called upon the transitional federal institutions to implement, in good faith, the recommendations of the National Reconciliation Congress, and to urgently develop a road map for the remainder of the transition period, including the drafting of the new Federal Constitution, the conduct of a population census and preparations for national elections in 2009, as set out in the Transitional Federal Charter. Members of the Contact Group welcomed the commitment by President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed at the closing session to pave a new political path that will win the confidence of the Somali people and to continue the dialogue process.

26. The meeting of the International Contact Group was followed by a meeting in Stockholm on 14 September, regrouping key international donors, including Sweden, Italy, Norway, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the European Commission, the World Bank and the United Nations, to coordinate assistance strategies for Somalia. The meeting discussed possible steps to prepare the ground for an eventual donor conference for Somalia.

27. My new Special Representative, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, assumed his responsibilities in Nairobi on 19 September. On 22 September, Mr. Ould-Abdallah visited Mogadishu where he met with the President, Prime Minister and Speaker of Parliament, as well as with Ali Mahdi, the Chairman of the National Governance and Reconciliation Committee. He also joined the leaders of the transitional federal institutions in planting trees at Villa Somalia in commemoration of the International Day of Peace.

28. On 15 October 2007, my Special Representative convened a meeting of the special envoys on Somalia to foster greater unity of action within the international community. Participants expressed concern about the humanitarian situation in Somalia, and agreed to the proposal made by my Representative to seek a written commitment from all Somali parties to allow free access to humanitarian delivery and to refrain from harassing humanitarian workers. Also, considering the lack of progress and consensus among the Somali parties and the fast approaching end of the transition period, it was felt that the international community should elaborate a new agenda for peace and stability in the country.

29. On 25 October, my Special Representative chaired a workshop co-organized by the United Nations Political Office for Somalia and the United Kingdom Department for International Development to develop a harmonized approach among all partners under the leadership of the United Nations. The following five points were proposed on the way forward: (a) an agreed international plan of action, including the commitment of regional and external actors; (b) an agreed engagement with Somali actors, transitional federal institutions, opposition groups, business community, civil society organizations, diaspora, etc; (c) promotion of the implementation of the outcomes of the National Reconciliation Congress; (d) a prioritized and agreed approach on security sector stabilization; and (e) greater coordination within the international community.

IV. African Union Mission in Somalia

30. As stated in previous reports, on 20 February, the Security Council, in its resolution 1744 (2007), endorsed the establishment of the African Union Mission in

Somalia (AMISOM), based on the communiqué of the African Union Peace and Security Council of 19 January to carry out the following mandate: (a) to support dialogue and reconciliation in Somalia by assisting with the free movement, safe passage and protection of all those involved with the process; (b) to provide, as appropriate, protection to the transitional federal institutions to help them carry out their functions of government, and security for key infrastructure; (c) to assist, within its capabilities, and in coordination with other parties, with implementation of the National Security and Stabilization Plan, in particular the effective re-establishment and training of all-inclusive Somali security forces; (d) to contribute, as may be requested and within capabilities, to the creation of the necessary security conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance; and (e) to protect its personnel, facilities, installations, equipment and mission, and to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel. On 18 July, the African Union Peace and Security Council decided to extend the mandate of AMISOM for a further period of six months. On 20 August, the Security Council in its resolution 1772 (2007) welcomed the extension of the AMISOM mandate.

31. The deployment of AMISOM in Mogadishu is moving ahead slowly. To date, of the 8 000 troops authorized for AMISOM, only Uganda has contributed troops to the Mission, including two battalions and a force headquarters that were deployed to Mogadishu in early March 2007. The Ugandan troops are facing considerable security challenges, and have therefore limited their activities to patrolling parts of the city and assisting in the provision of humanitarian assistance. In a recent development, on 7 October, two mortars were fired at AMISOM premises in central Mogadishu. No casualties were reported. In the meantime, the Government of Burundi has sent a reconnaissance party to Mogadishu in preparation for the deployment of two battalions that have completed technical training provided by United States and French military trainers.

32. Currently, the African Union is facing serious financial, logistical and other constraints in deploying troops which would join the two Ugandan battalions already in the Somali capital. Together with the African Union, the United Nations is exploring possibilities for providing further assistance in strengthening and expanding the AMISOM presence on the ground. In addition, the United Nations has assisted in mobilizing bilateral assistance for troop-contributing countries, thereby speeding up the deployment of pledged contingents, and possibly encouraging other countries to contribute troops. The United Nations is also working with the African Union in developing an appropriate support package for AMISOM.

Contingency planning

33. Under the prevailing political and security situation, I believe that the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation cannot be considered a realistic and viable option. Furthermore, it has not been feasible, for security reasons, to send a technical assessment mission to Somalia. Nevertheless, a strategic assessment of United Nations interventions in Somalia has been initiated, with a view to providing an integrated approach and framework for United Nations engagement in Somalia. In addition, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations continues to review and update the existing contingency planning for a possible

peacekeeping operation and, as noted above, to assist the African Union in supporting AMISOM.

34. Given the complex security situation in Somalia, it may be advisable to look at additional security options, including the deployment of a robust multinational force or coalition of the willing. Such a force could initially be small and self-sustaining, growing over time with the achievement of specific security and political milestones. In due time, such a force could be built to a level that would enable Ethiopian forces to commence a partial, then complete withdrawal from the country.

V. Humanitarian situation

35. The humanitarian situation in south-central Somalia continued to deteriorate during the reporting period. Overall, 1.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, a 50 per cent increase since the beginning of the year. Hundreds of thousands have fled Mogadishu to areas that lack basic social services, employment opportunities and protection. WFP requires 60,000 metric tons of food to feed 1.2 million people between August and December 2007. The humanitarian response has been hindered by mounting insecurity, lack of access to populations in need, restrictions on movement and lack of capacity on the ground. In particular, the presence and technical expertise of more non-governmental organizations is needed in Somalia with adequate financial support from donors to implement humanitarian programmes.

36. There are currently 750,000 internally displaced persons in Somalia, of which 400,000 are long-term and 350,000 are newly displaced. During the relative quiet between April and June, about 125,000 people returned to Mogadishu. Since June, over 64,000 internally displaced persons have again moved out of the capital. Since the beginning of the year, an estimated 20,000 Somalis have fled to the eastern region of Ethiopia and have been accommodated in a newly established refugee camp or supported through a community-based assistance strategy. Although the Somali border with Kenya remains officially closed, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recorded more than 4,000 new Somali refugees in eastern Kenya.

37. The United Nations country team has conducted several missions to Mogadishu as part of the ongoing effort to address the dire humanitarian needs of 100,000 internally displaced persons along the Mogadishu/Afgooye road. Food and non-food items, including clean water and plastic sheeting, were provided to the internally displaced persons. United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations plan to scale-up emergency response programmes in the internally displaced person settlements, as well as the food insecure zones in south-central Somalia.

38. In August, the Food Security Analysis Unit of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) issued an alert concerning the Shabelle regions of south-central Somalia, which are currently facing a food security and nutrition crisis, with malnutrition rates well above the emergency threshold. A series of multiple shocks has transformed Somalia's "bread-basket" into a humanitarian emergency. Some of these include the poor rains from April to June, which resulted in the worst cereal harvest in 13 years, although most of the shocks are conflict related. There is a serious risk that the nutrition situation could further deteriorate.

At least 500,000 people, both residents and internally displaced persons, are in need of assistance in Middle and Lower Shabelle.

39. Access continues to be a challenge. Humanitarian goods, including WFP trucks laden with emergency rations for internally displaced persons fleeing the violence in Mogadishu, have frequently been subject to Transitional Federal Government checkpoints and arbitrary taxation and customs fees at ad hoc roadblocks manned by armed militias.

40. On 17 October, a group of 50 heavily armed Transitional Federal Government soldiers violated the United Nations premises in Mogadishu and forcefully arrested the WFP Head of Office. WFP temporarily suspended food distributions. I issued a statement condemning the arrest of the WFP officer and called for his immediate and unconditional release. On 22 October, the staff member was released. Subsequently, food aid and all other United Nations planned activities were resumed. The United Nations country team and the Transitional Federal Government agreed to undertake a joint fact-finding exercise to determine the circumstances of the arrest.

41. By the end of September, the consolidated appeal for Somalia was 53.2 per cent funded, with $161 million committed out of $304 million required. In addition, the Humanitarian Response Fund, which was established to ensure timely emergency response, disbursed $10 million to United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations for 48 projects. Planning for the 2008 consolidated appeals process has begun, with estimated needs expected to increase given the ongoing conflict, displacement and rain failure.

VI. Human rights and protection

42. The deteriorating human rights situation in Somalia, particularly the issue of protection in Mogadishu, remains a serious concern. Independent media and journalists are repeatedly facing increased harassment by the Transitional Federal Government. In August and September, four journalists were killed, bringing to eight the number of journalists murdered since the beginning of the year. The Transitional Federal Government has yet to conduct an investigation or publicly condemn these assassinations.

43. Although it remains difficult to ascertain the number of casualties, local human rights organizations report that, in July, more than 100 civilians lost their lives in the course of house-to-house searches and fighting between the Transitional Federal Government/Ethiopian troops and insurgents in Mogadishu. In August, the reported figure increased to 200 civilians killed and 400 others wounded. Due to restrictions on movement imposed by Transitional Federal Government troops, the ability of humanitarian agencies to provide assistance has been critically undermined. Furthermore, local human rights defenders and humanitarian workers are reportedly subject to threats and intimidation by the Transitional Federal Government troops. The operational capacity of Médecins sans frontières has significantly diminished due to reported harassment of its medical staff by troops. According to Médecins sans frontières, Transitional Federal Government forces and Ethiopian troops have entered hospitals to arrest suspected wounded insurgents in violation of the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The International Committee of the Red Cross

continues to receive a significant number of wounded civilians daily as a result of the ongoing conflict in the capital.

44. Local human rights organizations have expressed serious concerns at the rapidly deteriorating living conditions of the population in the capital resulting from the burning of the Bakara market and its ensuing economic impact.

45. Targeted assassinations of district officials in the capital continue unabated. Since January, a total of 15 district commissioners or deputy district commissioners have reportedly been murdered in the capital.

46. The independent expert appointed by the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in Somalia undertook a mission to Nairobi and Mogadishu from 17 to 21 September. He met with Prime Minister Gedi, who renewed previous pledges to ratify key human rights instruments and establish an independent national human rights institution. The expert urged the transitional federal institutions to actively pursue the integration of international human rights norms and standards into the reconstruction of its executive, legislative and judicial branches. He stressed that any future United Nations peacekeeping mission in Somalia should have a mandate to assist in the protection of civilians and should also feature a significant human rights component. The expert strongly urged the investigation of all human rights abuses committed in Somalia so that peace would not be built on impunity.

47. Human trafficking from Somalia to Yemen remains a growing concern, with large-scale movement expected, particularly due to ongoing instability in the Ogaden region in Ethiopia. In the last week of September, 14 smuggling boats carrying more than 1,500 people from Boosaaso reached the Yemeni coast, with 62 reported dead or missing. In early August, an inter-agency mission travelled to "Puntland" to discuss with Government officials ways to prevent and mitigate mixed migration. UNHCR is establishing tools to provide regular international protection to migrants who apply for refugee status, and is identifying possible preventive measures to avoid human trafficking.

48. Community mobilization for child protection has continued in all zones of Somalia. More than 200 communities have been mobilized and child protection committees established during the reporting period. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has also trained over 50 teachers/mentors in Baidoa on psychosocial care and support of children. Monitoring of and reporting on Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), in particular in Mogadishu and surrounding areas, is ongoing. High-level advocacy has focused on the impact of conflict on children, in particular on the prevalent use of child soldiers.

VII. Operational activities to support peace

Reconciliation and peace initiatives

49. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continued to provide technical and financial support to the National Reconciliation Congress, coordinating and administrating multidonor funding totalling some $8 million. It provided advisory support and capacity and assisted with organization, training, logistics and media and communications. UNDP also arranged and facilitated the visit of members of the National Governance and Reconciliation Committee, led by

its Chairman, Ali Mahdi, to Kigali to meet an advisory team from the Government of Rwanda to share experiences, lessons and best practices from Rwanda's own reconciliation experience.

50. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) promoted the inclusion of women in the National Reconciliation Congress, and supported a three-day workshop in Mogadishu for 40 local non-governmental organizations, with the aim of advocating for women's participation in political decision-making in general, and in the Congress in particular, especially in ensuring that women are represented and that their voices are heard in the Congress.

Health, child survival, maternal and child health

51. UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) have completed accelerated child survival and development strategy for 2008-2009. The initiative aims to reduce under-five mortality by 15 per cent over the two year period, reaching 1.8 million infant and young children and 1.6 million women of childbearing age with a specially designed package of basic interventions twice each year. The strategy is part of the United Nations transition plan for Somalia for 2008-2009.

52. UNFPA supported 23 mother and child health clinics with supplies and drugs for safe motherhood and antenatal care, including equipment for emergency obstetric care to three referral hospitals in Mogadishu, Baidoa and Gaalkacyo. UNICEF continued to supply over 100 mother and child health facilities and 15 hospitals throughout Somalia with highly effective anti-malaria treatment. UNICEF/WHO subnational immunization days campaigns vaccinated 597,989 children under five against polio in 35 of 113 districts (coverage 99 per cent). In July, 1,691,219 children were also vaccinated against polio. Wild polio virus cases in 2007 remained stable at eight, with no new cases reported since March 2007. Some 68,998 children between 9 months and 5 years of age were vaccinated against measles in the Lower Shabelle region through a joint UNICEF/WHO 10-day measles catch-up campaign. WHO continues to conduct supplementary immunization campaigns, including national immunization days, to increase coverage all over Somalia. UNFPA also supported the training of 34 auxiliary nurses from 23 health facilities in south-central Somalia. A major set back was the killing of a national polio officer in Abudwak district, Galguduud region, in the central zone of Somalia close to the Ethiopian border.

53. While the reconstruction of the outpatient department of the Bay regional hospital in Baidoa was completed successfully, in a coordinated effort between WHO and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), other rehabilitation activities of key health-care facilities have been initiated in south-central Somalia to increase access to quality health care.

54. In a health cluster, coordination meetings between health agencies are carried out inside Somalia, including Baidoa, Mogadishu, Beledweyne and Xuddur. The ongoing regional health profile, led jointly by WHO and implementing partners, aims to develop a comprehensive picture of all health-related activities. WHO continues to support the Ministry of Health of the Transitional Federal Government through the rehabilitation of and provision of equipment for its offices in

Mogadishu, and the recruitment of a special adviser to the Minister, based in the WHO office in Baidoa.

Safe water, sanitation and hygiene education

55. The construction or rehabilitation of urban water supply systems, small rural water systems, rural water yards and shallow/hand dug wells is ongoing. This has resulted in increased access to safe and clean water for approximately 30,000 additional people in south-central Somalia. UNICEF is working to ensure their sustainability by training local water committees to manage, administer, operate and maintain the water sources.

56. UNICEF helped communities to establish and train 1,580 community education committees in all zones to construct and improve water and sanitation facilities in primary schools, and to promote improved sanitation and hygiene practices by schoolchildren. More than 20 schools benefited from improved sanitation facilities, and a number of communities and internally displaced persons settlements benefited from 82 latrines. More than 12,000 adults and 1,200 children in south-central Somalia had improved hygiene awareness through participatory hygiene and sanitation transformation and children's hygiene and sanitation training methodologies.

57. WHO contributed to the containment of the acute watery diarrhoea/cholera outbreak in south-central Somalia between March and June 2007 through its training efforts in proper case management in the affected areas. As of September 2007, a total of 4,342 acute watery diarrhoea cases were reported in Somaliland, including 49 related deaths. During the past four months, as the acute watery diarrhoea outbreak was brought under control, UNICEF chlorinated 800 water sources.

58. WHO is stepping up its efforts to prevent similar outbreaks from occurring or spreading, through the implementation of the early warning and response system for early detection and rapid response of disease outbreaks. As part of the system, WHO will be upgrading two reference public health laboratories and six regional laboratories in south-central Somalia. Another key component is the elaboration of outbreak preparedness plans at the regional and zonal levels.

Education

59. A total of 4,650 pupils graduated during the reporting period. However, there is serious concern that many students will not be enrolled in the new term, especially in Mogadishu, owing to the prevailing security situation.

60. Between July and August, UNICEF delivered 360 school tents to Mogadishu, Kismaayo, Baidoa and Jawhar to provide temporary school spaces for the start of the new school year. Eight tented schools have also been established to cater for schoolchildren in internally displaced persons camps in Boosaaso. In the north-east zone, UNICEF is supporting the construction of nine new schools to benefit 2,880 schoolchildren. School desks and benches have also been provided to 25 existing schools in the zone, benefiting over 3,000 pupils. A total of 36,315 textbooks and teacher guides, and 6,000 non-formal education modules and teacher guides were dispatched to the three zones of Somalia and are ready for distribution

to 1,733 schools. This will benefit approximately 393,856 schoolchildren. In addition, 2,272 education kits were procured and will soon be dispatched to benefit approximately 132,000 schoolchildren in south-central Somalia.

61. As part of a multisectoral peacebuilding project on the contentious "green line" separating north and south Gaalkacyo, UNICEF has completed the rehabilitation of Salama Primary School, which will benefit 800 schoolchildren. Two child protection advocates were trained and deployed to the internally displaced persons communities of Gaalkacyo, where they will carry out community mobilization activities for child protection, with a focus on sexual and gender-based violence.

Livelihoods and food security

62. In June, FAO, as lead agency of the agriculture and livelihood cluster, initiated the establishment of an intra-cluster programme to rebuild the livelihoods of recently displaced populations from Mogadishu. The programme will focus on restoring assets (e.g., livestock to destitute pastoralists) in the regions of Galguduud, Mudug and Hiraan, where the majority (65 per cent) of the internally displaced persons have fled.

63. The key findings of FAO Food Security Analysis Unit on the post-Gu rains analysis were presented, on 13 August, to the Food Security and Rural Development Committee of the Somali Support Secretariat. The analysis, which highlighted the emerging food security crisis in the Middle and Lower Shabelle regions, was factored into the agriculture and livelihoods cluster response plan of the consolidated appeals process, as well as in a submission for funding under the Central Emergency Response Fund to address the humanitarian emergency needs of 400,000 people.

Shelter

64. Shelter construction projects for internally displaced persons and returnees in Hargeysa, "Somaliland", and Garoowe, "Puntland" are at an advanced stage of completion, and a joint shelter intervention has recently been initiated in Boosaaso, "Puntland". UNHCR and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) have finalized the 2008 shelter response plan that focuses on emergency shelter and improvement of internally displaced person settlements in south-central Somalia, while identifying more permanent shelter in the main towns of "Somaliland" and "Puntland".

Security and rule of law

65. The strategic efforts of UNDP are directed at strengthening the rule of law and security through support for both the police and the judiciary. One of the main tenets of police support is capacity-building, including training on human rights, accountability, providing training materials, refurbishing training facilities in Boosaaso and Baidoa and equipment such as vehicles, as part of wider efforts to reactivate the Somali police force. The aim is to create a police service accountable to the law for its operational activity, to the Government for its efficiency and

effectiveness, and to the population for the manner in which it polices their communities.

66. Some 1,400 police recruits graduated in August and September from the Armo and Labatinjirow Police Training Centre; two thirds will be deployed in south-central Somalia, and one third in "Puntland". Police trainers at both academies underwent a six-week train-the-trainers programme in March 2007. The police advisory committees have been actively undertaking their monitoring activities at eight police stations in Mogadishu. UNDP intends to expand the model to all 16 district police stations in Mogadishu, and later to key regional police stations across Somalia.

67. UNDP is working closely with judicial counterparts to develop a three-to-five year strategy on reactivation of the judiciary in Somalia, using a flexible approach to meet short-term challenges, while focusing on long-term sustainability. Both supply side (i.e., judges and lawyers) and demand side (i.e., barriers to access, legal awareness) actors will be included in a broad consultative process.

68. The Somali Demilitarization and Reintegration Programme, within the context of the National Security and Stabilization Plan, was established in June. Preliminary support is focused on capacity-building and strategy/policy development.

69. Reports of accidents caused by mines and unexploded ordnance continue, particularly in Mogadishu. To address this growing threat to civilian safety, UNICEF is supporting radio/television advocacy on the issue, as well as training on mine risk education for all 48 child protection advocates.

Governance and public administration

70. During the review period, UNDP continued its two-pronged strategy to develop governance institutions at the federal/State and local level. District-based reconciliation processes and participatory selection of district and regional authorities have progressed in south-central Somalia, with five new district councils, a regional council and a governor inaugurated in the Bakool region. A 21-day training course on principles of local governance, including dispute settlement, gender and minority inclusion, and the role of government in social service delivery for district and regional councillors and community leaders was completed for the new councils of Bay region, and is under way in each district of the Bakool region. The district-based reconciliation process has started in the 19 districts of Gedo, Middle Shabelle and Hiraan regions. The process is led by the Ministry of Interior of the Transitional Federal Government, with support from UNDP and UNOPS.

71. Rehabilitation of district and regional government compounds is under way in Bay region, and engineering surveys have been completed and tenders launched in Bakool region. Regions that successfully conclude local reconciliation processes and select new leaders through a participatory process will receive United Nations support to establish administrations, rebuild infrastructure, train staff and undertake service delivery projects.

72. UNDP supported the Ministry of Interior in its efforts to convene a broad-based committee in Mogadishu of professionals, traditional and religious leaders, non-governmental organizations and community representatives to draft a city charter. The Independent Federal Constitutional Commission undertook a training

workshop on models of federalism, and a study tour to Yemen, as part of preparatory capacity-building for the Commission, with support from UNDP.

73. UNFPA, in collaboration with UNDP, supported statistical capacity-building through trainings on data collection and processing for civil servants and university graduates in Hargeysa and Garoowe.

74. UN-Habitat continued its work focusing on urban governance, including legal and institutional reforms, strengthening municipal governance and the role of civil society, urban management, including strategic planning, land management, municipal finance, delivery of basic services and local economic development, and the implementation of local strategic projects, such as housing projects, construction of markets and slaughterhouses, basic urban infrastructure and upgrading of displaced people's settlements. Finance staff from nine municipal authorities in "Somaliland" and "Puntland" completed an elaborate training programme supported by UN-Habitat.

75. UN-Habitat is also developing land management information systems to provide information for the collection of land use taxes so as to increase municipal revenues. Support is being provided to central and local authorities in the development of improved legal frameworks and strategies for urban land management, advocacy for secure tenure, land allocation for settlement of internally displaced persons and returnees, and planning of new settlement areas and zones for urban expansion.

HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence

76. A workplan of the joint United Nations team on AIDS covering the period June 2007-December 2009 has been elaborated within the United Nations transition plan. The AIDS response continues to build bridges between "Puntland", "Somaliland" and south-central Somalia through multisectoral AIDS commissions supported by resources from the United Nations and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to avert a major AIDS epidemic.

77. The unpublished sero surveillance report of women attending antenatal clinics in 2007 indicates that prevalence has not decreased. The epidemic is already generalized in "Puntland" and "Somaliland", and is of alarming proportions, especially among young people. The joint team has begun to map the vulnerable and cross-border populations.

78. As part of the "Unite for children, unite against AIDS" campaign, 27 religious leaders were trained on HIV advocacy and how to incorporate HIV prevention, care and support messages into their sermons and community work. Through the woman-to-woman initiative, 1,900 young girls and women across Somalia have completed peer education classes. Some 17 functioning quality-assured voluntary counselling and testing centres now exist across the country; five centres of excellence have been established and are providing a comprehensive package of treatment and care for opportunistic infections and AIDS; and some 40 local non-governmental organizations have been strengthened.

79. Cases of rape and other sexual and gender-based violence have been reported as one of the most common human rights violations being committed by the warring factions and other groups in Mogadishu. Women and girls are being raped within the

city, on their way to safer areas and on arrival at their refuge destinations. This includes gang rape by soldiers and other local militia. Some are reported to have been captured and turned into sex slaves for weeks. Numerous cases of sexual violence have also been reported in "Somaliland", specifically in Burao. Some of the perpetrators were arrested; however, in other cases, there was no follow-up or support provided by the authorities. In Hargeysa, a survey carried out by human right monitors indicated that some newly arrived internally displaced persons were raped on their way to "Somaliland" from south and central Somalia. The United Nations and other humanitarian actors continue to raise awareness and to implement activities on prevention and response mechanisms to address sexual and gender-based violence.

80. UNFPA mobilized the participation of youth for peace through supporting events on the International Day of Peace and on the International Youth Day in Baidoa, Mogadishu and Hargeysa as a means for communities to discuss ways of stopping violence in general, and against women in particular. UNFPA supported workshops in Mogadishu and Merka for women and youth activists working in internally displaced person camps on how to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence. A television series on sexual and gender-based violence was also produced targeting communities in Boosaaso. UNFPA trained 25 nurses from 23 mother and child health centres in the south-central regions, on how to provide appropriate clinical and medical care to sexually abused persons, including appropriate case management.

VIII. Observations

81. As I mentioned in my letter to the Security Council of 20 September 2007 (S/2007/566), the United Nations is elaborating a two-track approach for Somalia based on: (a) a political track to encourage dialogue within the Transitional Federal Government itself and with all opposition groups both inside and outside Somalia, in the hope of bringing about a cessation of hostilities and the establishment of broad-based and inclusive transitional institutions; and (b) a security track that would necessitate the strengthening of AMISOM to a level that would allow for the withdrawal of foreign forces and create the necessary conditions for stability. In addition, I also recommended the strengthening of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia by providing it with the necessary resources to implement the two-pronged approach.

82. In pursuit of the two-pronged approach, the United Nations system, including the United Nations Political Office for Somalia and the United Nations country team, has also embarked on developing a coherent peacebuilding strategy for Somalia. In support of these efforts, an interdepartmental and inter-agency integrated task force on Somalia is being established.

83. Following a series of consultations held by my Special Representative in Nairobi, I am pleased to note the support voiced by members of the international community for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ould Abdallah and the United Nations Political Office for Somalia to play a leadership role in coordinating the efforts of all stakeholders.

84. I welcome the amicable resolution of the divisions between President Yusuf and Prime Minister Gedi and the conciliatory spirit of the statements issued by both

on the latter's resignation. I call upon the Transitional Federal Government to continue to seek peaceful solutions to its internal differences so as to focus its efforts on national reconciliation.

85. Despite its shortcomings, the National Reconciliation Congress is an important development that has created opportunities for political and broad-based social reconciliation in Somalia. It should be considered as a step in the long process of national reconciliation. My Special Representative will intensify his efforts, in close cooperation with key Somali actors and international partners, to foster inter-Somali dialogue, including with opposition groups both inside and outside Somalia. To this end, I urge the Transitional Federal Government to demonstrate its political will by strengthening its unity and reaching out to the opposition groups. Similarly, I call upon all armed and unarmed opposition groups to renounce violence and accept the Transitional Federal Charter, and thus create a conducive environment for dialogue and genuine reconciliation. I commend all international partners for their tireless efforts and commitment to help the Somali parties reach a comprehensive agreement.

86. I also call upon the leaders of the transitional federal institutions to implement without delay the recommendations of the National Reconciliation Congress, including the development of a roadmap for the completion of the tasks provided for in the Transitional Federal Charter, particularly the constitutional process, preparation for the national population census and the holding of elections scheduled for 2009, as well as the National Security and Stabilization Plan.

87. I am concerned with the ongoing violence between "Puntland" and "Somaliland", and urge both to resort to peaceful means for resolving their dispute.

88. I condemn all acts of violence in Somalia and call upon all parties to cease hostilities and engage in the search for sustainable peace. I particularly call upon all parties to protect the civilian population and humanitarian workers. I also strongly condemn the attack on AMISOM premises in central Mogadishu, as well as the violation of the United Nations premises in Mogadishu, and urge all parties to refrain from acts of violence, the arrest of or any form of harassment against humanitarian workers.

89. I commend the AMISOM troops for their professionalism in discharging their duties in a very difficult environment. The strengthening of AMISOM capabilities on the ground, including the completion of its full deployment, remains an urgent priority. As mentioned earlier, the United Nations remains committed to providing all possible support to the African Union in strengthening AMISOM and expediting the completion of its full deployment. I urge States members of the African Union that have pledged to send troops to Somalia to do so without further delay. I also appeal to the international community to assist the African Union with the necessary logistical and financial resources for the deployment of AMISOM.

90. As I have indicated in my letter dated 20 September 2007 to the President of the Security Council (see para. 81 above) the international community should also consider, in addition to AMISOM and a possible United Nations peacekeeping force, other options, including a multinational force or a coalition of willing partners.

91. In the meantime, the United Nations will continue its efforts to address the serious humanitarian needs in the country. I encourage the international community

to continue to generously support humanitarian relief efforts in Somalia. I call upon all parties to provide unhindered access to relief efforts and to ensure strict compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights principles.

92. I reiterate the need to explore measures to deal with the regional dimensions of the Somali crisis, and to find ways to address the security concerns of Somalia and its neighbours, including respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States of the region.

93. I remain concerned by the continuing piracy off the coast of Somalia and its adverse impact on the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance and commercial shipping. Given the lack of capacity of the Transitional Federal Government to combat piracy, I reiterate the call to Member States of the United Nations with naval and military assets in the region to take action, in consultation with the Transitional Federal Government, to protect merchant shipping, with a particular focus on vessels transporting humanitarian aid.

94. Finally, I wish to reaffirm my deep appreciation to François Lonseny Fall, my former Special Representative, and his successor Ahmedou Ould Abdallah for their respective leadership and efforts to foster peace and reconciliation among the Somali people. I call upon all Somali parties and Member States to continue to give my new Special Representative their fullest support and cooperation in the pursuit of this goal.